

AN ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS ACTIVITIES
PERFORMED BY AN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

AN ABSTRACT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
SPECIALIST IN EDUCATION

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AN ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem

How much time does an elementary school principal spend on various activities she performs and how do they relate to her interpersonal role, informational role, and decisional role?

Purpose of the Project

The writer's purpose for making this study was to analyze the time used in performing various activities utilizing Henry Mintzberg's paradigm "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact." The writer set up a checklist to see how often she performed activities that could be identified with Mintzberg's Interpersonal, Informational and Decisional roles, along with his designated subroles: figurehead, leader, liaison; disseminator, spokesman, monitor; entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator.

Findings

The following provides insight into the real use of this principal's time from September to December:

1. The Interpersonal role required 46 percent of the writer's time; the Informational role required 41 percent of the writer's time; and the Decisional role required 13 percent of her time.
2. Subroles of figurehead, disseminator, and monitoring were most time-consuming.
3. Subroles of entrepreneur, liaison, and allocator were least time-consuming.

Conclusions

1. The majority of the principal's time was spent on activities that involved verbal communication, use of the telephone, taking part in numerous conferences, impromptu meetings with parents, teachers, and students.
2. Mandatory activities such as completing reports, forms etcetera used up large blocks of time each month.
3. Because of the vast amount of information that had to be shared with the staff, the subrole of disseminator was important in implementing the school program effectively.
4. The amount of time required to handle disturbances decreased as activities in the school setting stabilized.
5. Less time was devoted to monitoring activities, i.e. those directly related to supervising the instructional phase of the program, than to figurehead activities.
6. Evidence gathered is not in accord with writings that speak about decision-making being at the heart of administration. The discrepancy between the theorist and practitioner needs re-examining.
7. There is a grave dilemma between requirements laid out by the system as opposed to other pressures outside of the system.

Implications

1. Much time was spent on useless, time-consuming activities. There is a great need to cut out some of the trivialities.
2. Additional research is needed to align theoretic constructs with the activities of the real world of the principal.
3. Dissemination is a vital and necessary means of communicating information.
4. As the school year stabilized, dealing with disruptive behavior became a minimal time factor.

Recommendations

1. Some means of orientation should be afforded principals in the area of "time management." This could be done at the graduate level or as a part of the staff development program implemented by the board.
2. The utilization of a variety of ways to communicate is essential.

3. Similar studies should be made by others. Just as this writer was not cognizant of how she specifically used her time, there are others also unaware of how this precious commodity is utilized.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The most observable factor leading to the inauguration of the office of school principal was urbanization in America between 1830 and 1860. It was in the urban districts where innovations and improvements first appeared in the development of the common school. Rapid increase in city population led superintendents of schools who had heretofore graded the schools themselves and supervised the teachers, to delegate these responsibilities, in large part, to subordinates. It was logical to relieve the principal-teacher, the forerunner of the school principal, of some of his teaching activities and hold him primarily responsible for pupil classification, for supervision, and for the general administration of individual school units.¹

During the period from the mid-1800s to 1900, a shift occurred in the administrative duties prescribed for the principal. They were required to perform new duties such as organization and general management, control of pupils, and responsibility for buildings and grounds.

The principalship found its prestige was greatly enhanced, as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Principals had gained the right to decide which pupils should be promoted. They gained the right to play a part in the transfer and assignment of teachers and orders to teachers from the central office were now sent through their hands.

¹William S. Elsbree, Elementary School Administration and Supervision (New York: American Book Company, 1951), p. 4.

Prior to 1920, supervision by principals in elementary schools consisted of inspection. The visit was unannounced and in the ensuing conference, the "expert" principal told the teacher what to do. For another ten or fifteen years, supervision was thought of as direction. The principal knew what should be taught and when and how it should be taught. Since 1935, the concept of supervision has changed to one of coordination and service.

Because of the haphazard growth pattern of the principal teacher's role, the relations between him and other teachers were not clearly defined, and thus became a potential source of friction. In 1939 ways of differentiating between the duties of principal teachers and teachers were defined. The principal teacher was (1) to function as the head of the school charged to his care; (2) to regulate classes and course of instruction of all pupils, whether they occupied his room or the rooms of other teachers; (3) to discover any defects in the school and apply remedies; (4) to make defects known to the visitor or trustee of the ward or district, if he could not remedy the conditions; (5) to give necessary instructions to his assistants; (6) to classify pupils; (7) to safeguard school houses and furniture; (8) to keep the school clean; (9) to instruct his assistants; (10) to refrain from impairing the standing of assistants, especially in the eyes of their pupils; (11) to require the cooperation of his assistants.¹

Administrative duties of the principal developed before his supervisory function was fully realized. As a result administrative duties have often monopolized the major portion of the principal's time. Although

¹Paul B. Jacobson, James D. Logdson, and Robert R. Wiegman, The Principalship: New Perspectives (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), pp. 29-30.

it has not been general policy for principals to inaugurate educational innovations in school, individual school principals have been responsible for many developments such as cooking classes, sewing classes, manual training in high schools, and constructive activities in elementary schools.¹

The elementary school principal today holds a position of unusual importance in the public school system. Not only does she have wide latitude with respect to administrative policies and procedures relating to her school, but more and more she is being asked to assume leadership responsibility for curriculum improvements and school-community relationships.

The elementary school principal has duties that are related to the central office staff, teachers, parents and other lay citizens, the custodian, the school secretary, and the children attending the school.

Today's administrator is charged with a myriad of responsibilities. She must create a climate for participatory decision making, develop good internal communication, set program goals and organize school programs, organize the instructional program making allowances for individual differences, provide schedules for staff and students, allow for staff development and evaluation, handle grievances, counsel and recruit and select staff. She must be a versatile individual to fulfill all the responsibilities demanded of her. She must be skillful in the realm of personal management; she must understand the school plant and know how to operate and maintain it efficiently; she must be conversant with modern school business practices; she must know how to work with the public and she must be able to give leadership to her staff in curriculum improvement.

¹Ibid., p. 32.

These combined functions constitute a tremendous challenge to the elementary school principal. They demand a higher and more professional type of leadership than ever before, and offer her a great opportunity to serve the children in her school.

"Today's supervisor must be a vigorous leader, a shrewd and effective planner of work, a source of technical know-how, and a deft mediator between policy-setting management on the one hand and rank-and-file workers and their union representatives on the other."¹

Conceptually, the principal is still both administrator and supervisor. Her basic supervisory task is to set up environmental factors that are conducive to the continuous growth of the staff, to provide for exchange of views and information among themselves, and to encourage them to help one another by capitalizing on their own resources.

The primary aim of supervision is to recognize the inherent value of each person so that his full potential will be realized. Supervision would direct attention toward the fundamentals of education and the improvement of the total teaching-learning process.²

As a supervisor, the principal is concerned with providing effective leadership within the staff. To do this, she should seek constantly to improve her sensitivity to the feelings of others, to increase the accuracy of her estimate of group opinion on important issues, to become more cooperative in her working relationships, to seek to establish higher goals for herself, and to interact more frequently with those in the group with which she works.

¹Lester R. Bittel, What Every Supervisor Should Know (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), p. 1.

²Kimball Wiles, Supervision for Better Schools, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 5.

Innovative principals identify their roles in terms of educational leadership. Leadership implies good communication with the staff, the students, and the community. The communication system should allow information and ideas to flow up and down the line.

The principal must be able to deal effectively with the human side of the educational enterprise while at the same time facilitate maximum organizational goal attainment.¹

An educational administrator's job, like other managers, can be described in terms of various "roles", or organized sets of behaviors identified with a position. Henry Mintzberg looked at the activities which a manager performs and identified three roles, three distinct types of behaviors which he classified as Interpersonal, Informational, and Decisional. He further delineated ten subroles as subsets of these three roles as shown in the accompanying figure.

Three of the manager's subroles arise directly from her formal authority and involve basic interpersonal relationships. By virtue of her position as head of an organizational unit she must perform some duties of a ceremonial nature. She is also responsible for the work of the people of that unit and she must make contacts outside her vertical chain of command.²

As a result of interpersonal contacts with subordinates and the network of other contacts, the manager emerges as the nerve center of her organizational unit. She scans her environment for information, some of which she shares and distributes directly to her subordinates. Other information is sent to people outside her unit.

¹Jacobson, Logsdon, and Wiegman, The Principalship: New Perspectives, p. 6.

²Henry Mintzberg, "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact," in William F. Glueck and Laurence R. Jauch, The Managerial Experience: Cases, Exercises, and Readings (Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1977), pp. 9-10.

THE MANAGER'S ROLE

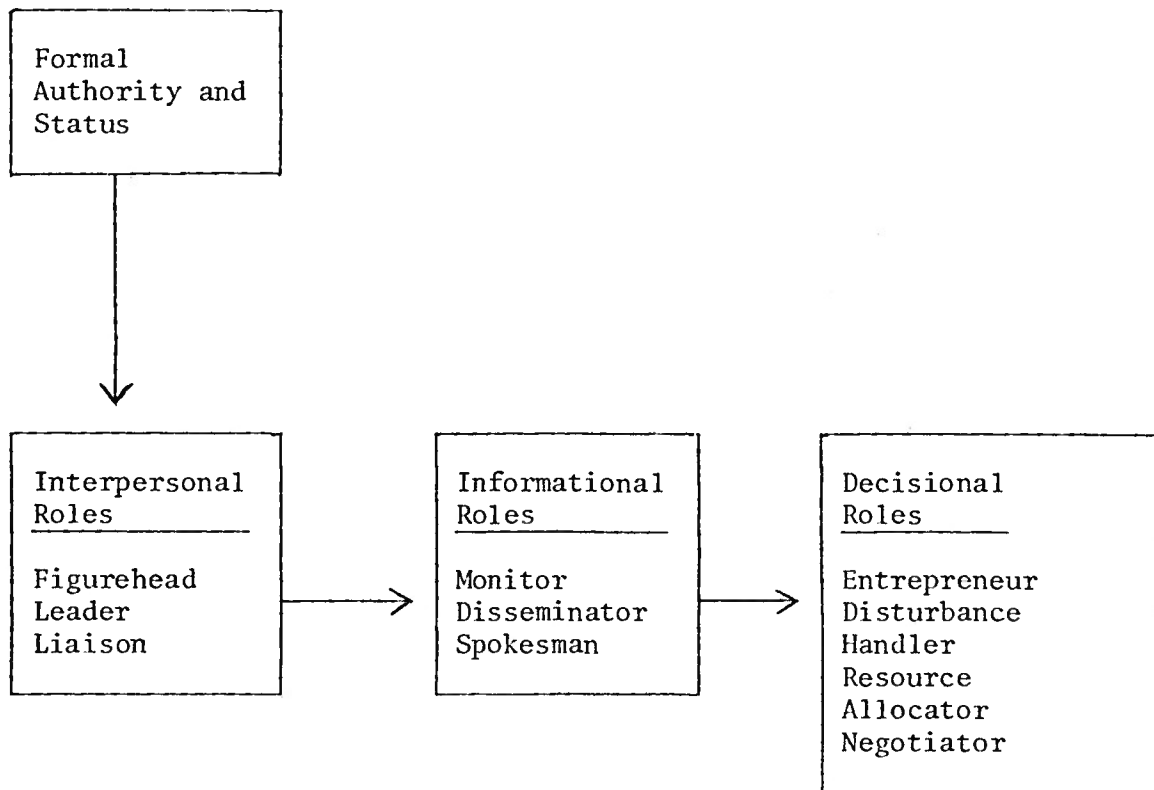


Figure 1

Adapted from Mintzberg, "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact,"
p. 9.

Information is not an end in itself; it is the basic input to decision making. The manager plays the major role in her unit's decision-making system. She seeks to improve her unit, to adapt it to changing conditions in the environment. She also involuntarily responds to pressure. It is her responsibility to decide who will get what in her organizational unit. At some point in time, managers are also negotiators.¹

The manager's effectiveness is significantly influenced by her insight into her own work. She is faced with the following challenges: (1) to find systematic ways to share her privileged information; (2) to deal consciously with pressures of superficiality by giving serious attention to issues that require it; and (3) to gain control of her own time by turning obligations to her advantage and by turning those things she wishes to do into obligations.²

Evolution of the Problem

As an elementary school principal, the writer felt that her time was badly allocated because of the many routine activities she performed. When these multitudinous routine chores have been performed by the principal, virtually no time remains for the higher level responsibilities.

She was concerned with an analysis of how her time was used and how it might be used better. Since time is scarce and needs to be rationed, the writer was interested in techniques that would enable her to better manage her time.

For example, during a span of time the writer performed many activities. Many activities are performed on a day-by-day basis, while others are performed on a monthly basis. Some activities are performed

¹ Ibid., pp. 11-13.

² Ibid., pp. 14-16.

in the immediate environment while others take place outside the environment.

Listed below are some of the time consuming activities performed on campus: (1) Answered the telephone; (2) checked mail; (3) Conferences with parents, teachers, resource personnel, pupils; (4) Took inventory; (5) Drafted letters and memoranda; (6) Observed classrooms; (7) Approved payroll sheets; (8) Conducted staff meetings; (9) Attended PTA Council meetings; (10) Completed monthly reports; (11) Handled discipline problems; (12) Attended assembly program; (13) Attended leadership team meetings; (14) Approved free lunch cards; (15) Completed Civil Rights Survey; (16) Approved IEP's for speech participants; (17) Completed application for accreditation; (18) Attended Title I PAC meetings; (19) Participated in fire drills and disaster alert drills; (20) Completed questionnaire from Urban Education Studies; (21) Approved receiving reports; (22) Approved grocery orders; (23) Sold school supplies; (24) Approved supply requisition forms; and (25) Completed material for R & E.

Those activities which took place outside the environment were as follows: (1) Principal's monthly meetings; (2) All-day workshop on Discipline guidelines; (3) All-day workshop on Decision Making; (4) All-day workshop on Minimum Skills; (5) All-day Reading Workshop; (6) Half-day workshop on Exceptional Children; (7) Two-day workshop on P. E.; (8) Half-day meeting on State Standard; (9) Superintendent's luncheon; and (10) All-day workshop on Evaluating New Teachers.

The writer was well aware of the fact that all of those activities were important, but they demanded a great deal of her time. Therefore, in order for her to have been effective, she had to adjust to the many role changes required to fulfill her obligations.

She was further reminded of the fact that she was held accountable for good performance from her pupils. In reality, supervision of the instructional phase of the program is sometimes neglected. This is not done intentionally, but as a result of so many other activities being given higher priority makes it extremely difficult to devote as much time as needed in this area.

In conversing with other principals, the writer found that they too are faced with this problem.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to take a serious look at the amount of time one elementary school principal spends on the variety of activities performed by her.

Specific questions the researcher sought answers to are as follows:

1. How is the elementary principal's time used?
2. To what roles can these activities be related?
3. How time consuming are these activities?
4. How time consuming are these roles?
5. How can situations needing improvement be restructured?

Statement of the Problem

How much time does an elementary school principal spend on various activities she performs and how do they relate to her interpersonal role, informational role, and decisional role?

Scope of the Project

This study was structured as action research, i.e. a case study limited to activities performed by only one elementary school principal during the months from September to December.

As such, it was exploratory. Similar type studies by other elementary school principals will be necessary to substantiate the value of such a project.

Procedure

From September to December the writer kept a daily log of each day's activities. A time schedule was set up so that activities performed within a fifteen (15) minute time frame at the beginning of each working hour were logged. (Appendix A)

At the end of each week, the writer compiled all activities into the following roles and subroles: (Appendix B)

1. Interpersonal (Figurehead, Leader, Liaison)
2. Informational (Monitor, Disseminator, Spokesman)
3. Decisional (Entrepreneur, Disturbance Handler, Resource allocator, Negotiator)

At the end of each month, the writer compiled all activities into the same roles and subroles.

The writer summarized all activities and roles performed during the time of this project. This analysis provided data for possible restructuring. The writer also kept a task priority sheet. (Appendix D)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The related literature is divided into three sections. The first section deals with information pertaining to roles and subroles of principals. The second section focuses on time dimensions as addressed by some of the experts. The third section deals with similar studies made in this area.

Roles and Subroles

The role of the elementary principal has expanded to include many subroles. The approach has shifted from an authoritative directorship to one of a more democratic nature, wherein the principal acts as coordinator of many activities centering around the elementary school.

Benjamin Culler states that the principal is held accountable for the total education of children, supervision of all personnel and for all phases of pupil personnel administration within her building. She is also expected to become completely management aligned and maintain a warm instruction climate in terms of staff relationships.¹

It is generally assumed that the principal is the instructional leader of her school, but few principals concentrate on education. Instead, their attention is likely to be diverted to other problems that have little direct connection with pedagogy. These problems appear to be systematically related to situational factors over which the principal has

¹Benjamin Cullers, "The Principalship: A Role in Transition," Clearing House 50 (December 1976): 179.

little or no control. Most principals said that their time, interests, and energy were devoted to tasks only remotely related to teaching.¹

According to George Odiorne, principals frequently find themselves parceled out in so many different directions, responding directly to so many requests of others, that the important tasks do not get done, or get done in an inadequate way. They become so enmeshed in activity they lose sight of why they are doing it, and the activity becomes a false goal, an end in itself. Odiorne calls this the "activity trap."²

McNerney states that no administrator can individually administer all the educational processes delegated to her. Consequently she must select qualified personnel to help her to fulfill adequately the obligation of her position. The job of the supervisor is to work with people, and to have people work with her. As she determines the purpose of her activity, and the people involved in promoting this activity, she will use the services of teachers, pupils, parents, citizens of the community, other supervisors and workers in the community organizations and agencies.³

Burton and Brueckner emphasize that supervision, if it is to achieve its central purpose of improving instruction, must provide:

1. Leadership that develops a unified school program and enriches the environment of all teachers.
2. The type of emotional atmosphere in which all are accepted and feel that they belong.
3. Opportunities to think and work together effectively as a faculty group.

¹David W. Swift, "Variations in the Role of the School Administrator," The Education Digest (January 1975): 2.

²George Odiorne, Management and the Activity Trap (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 6.

³Chester J. McNerney, Educational Supervision (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1951), p. 23.

4. Personnel procedures that give the teacher confidence in the school system.
5. Program change based on honest evaluation.¹

Scherdell states that principals readily find themselves making more business decisions. Most are tied down to the office unable to get out to the classrooms filling out forms, surveys, approving purchases, checking correspondences, enrollment data, attendance, maintenance, distribution of materials, etcetera.

If the principal were to be relieved of these duties, then she would have more time to work on such things as development of the learning process, teaching techniques, curriculum revision, cooperative planning, individualizing instruction, evaluating old and new programs, knowing children's needs, and providing for teachers needs.²

The effectiveness of the principal as an administrator may be questioned, due to excessive duties and responsibilities. These duties and responsibilities include driving school buses, performing janitorial services, issuing school supplies, taking sick children home, handling discipline, handling school-community problems, running errands, operating the school store, administering first-aid and other problems which imply that little time is left to meet the requirements of a teaching schedule or to help teachers with their individual problems.

Therefore, trying to organize the school program when so many duties and responsibilities are charged to the principal is very difficult.³

¹William H. Burton and Leo J. Brueckner, Supervision (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), p. 127.

²Raymond Scherdell, "To Make a Principal More Effective," The Education Digest (September 1973): 36.

³Ben Horton, "A Study of the Problems of Beginning Principals As A Basis for Improvement of the Program for the Education of Principals at Appalachian State Teachers College," Education Administration and Supervision 44 (September 1958): 267.

Management of Time

The management of time is one area in which principals must possess expertise. They are constantly complaining about insufficient time to perform their duties sufficiently. Because of this lack of time, principals often issue incomplete instructions hurriedly. Such instructions cause the people on the receiving end to question the procedure and rules. Misunderstandings develop which in turn cause more time and paper work.¹

As a result of investigating problems of beginning principals, Horton found that one specific problem most principals had was the distribution of time among teaching duties, administrative routine, and supervisory responsibilities.²

Principals spend a great deal of their time reacting to problems of others. The issue in time management is how to get more time free to act rather than react, how to spend more time on policy development and other leadership activities and less time focusing on other people's crises or engaging in pointless activity. The issue the principal must confront is not how to get more time, but rather how to spend more time on those things that are most important.³

There are basic skills involved in making time work for oneself. Such skills can be learned, improved and mastered. As a principal, one can begin to master the clock. Fox and Schwartz list the following activities basic to efficient utilization of time:

¹Edwina Woodward Hill, "A Model Management System For Elementary School Principals," (Education Specialist Degree Thesis, Atlanta University, 1977), p. 12.

²Horton, Education Administration and Supervision, p. 375.

³Michael J. Sexton and Karen Switzer, "The Time Management Ladder," The Education Digest (November 1978): 34.

1. Analyzing the use of time-- Make a diary or log of daily activities. Indicate the time, length, location, and description of the activity.
2. Planning time-- Take at least a few minutes each day to list the things that you plan to do the next day. Each day thereafter as a task is completed, cross it off the list.
3. Setting priorities-- Those tasks that are absolutely essential to the work of the day, or the plans for the future should be done first. Following these should be tasks that are less urgent but will require attention sometime during the day. All other tasks are to be performed as time permits.
4. Delegating-- Check the planning list and delegate all those items that can be assigned to others. Delegate authority along with the responsibility. Inform the faculty of this. Periodically check progress.
5. Concentrating on the problem at hand-- Determine which items on the planning list require the most concentration and work on them when you are at your peak. Force yourself to be decisive by deciding to handle each item that requires a decision but once.
6. Deadlining-- Assign a realistic deadline to each task. When it is not met, try to determine the reason.

It is interesting to note that authorities agree that the most efficient principals are not usually the busiest ones.¹

According to Hughes and Ubben how principals prefer to spend time is different from how they think they spend time, because few people can always spend their professional or personal hours exactly as they want.

The most surprising thing is that how principals perceive they are actually spending time invariably reveals a disparity. Principals are not only unable to spend time the way they most desire, they are not even aware of how they really are using their time.²

¹Willard Fox and Alfred Schwartz, Managerial Guide for School Principals (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, Inc., 1975), p. 61.

²Larry W. Hughes and Gerald C. Ubben, The Elementary Principal's Handbook: A Guide to Effective Action (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1978), p. 344.

TABLE 1

IDEAL, PERCEIVED, AND REAL USE OF TIME
BY ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

Function	Ideal Time %	Perceived Time %	Real Time %
Community-School Relations	15	10	8
Staff Personnel	20	20	15
Pupil Personnel	25	20	20
Educational Programming	25	15	10
Building Management	10	25	35
Unoccupied	5	10	12
Total	100	100	100

Adapted from Hughes and Ubben, The Elementary Principal's Handbook: A Guide to Effective Action, p. 356.

Responses from a group of studies of Elementary School Principals to a questionnaire by Hughes on ideal/percieved/and real use of time revealed the following information as shown in Table 1.

1. Ideal time-- Most principals would spend only 10 percent of their professional time on building and business management activities. They would devote about 25 percent of time each to pupil personnel, staff personnel, and educational programming. School-community relations activities would occupy about 15 percent of their time.
2. Perceived time usage-- Principals perceived themselves as spending about 20 percent of their time each on staff personnel, and pupil personnel, and 15 percent of their time to curriculum development. They thought building management activities occupied 25 percent of their time and community-school relations 10 percent.

3. Real use of time-- Principals actually spent an average of less than 10 percent of their time on community-school relations, 15 percent or less on staff and educational programming and a whopping 35 percent of their time on building management activities.¹

According to Eric Webster, an average manager's problem will be to reduce interruptions by about 50 percent, reduce the time spent on phone calls by 50 percent, and on correspondence by 30 percent, double that time allotted for planning and thinking, and budget at least half an hour daily which he keeps free to think about nothing, in particular.²

Research conducted by NEA over a period of forty (40) years as shown in Table 2 gives evidence of only a small shift in the amount of time allotted to the major functions of the elementary principals. It does appear that principals are making some small gains in reducing the amount of time they devote to clerical work. It also appears that principals are devoting more time to public relations and working with community groups.³

The processing of information is a key part of the manager's job. In two British studies by researcher Rosemary Stewart, it was found that managers spent an average of 66 percent to 80 percent of their time in verbal (oral) communication. Mintzberg in his study of five (5) American executives found the figure to be 78 percent. These five (5) executives treated mail processing as a burden to be dispensed with. An analysis

¹Ibid., pp. 347-349

²Eric Webster, "Need More Time? Here's Where to Find It," Leadership on the Job: Guides to Good Supervision (New York: American Management Association, 1966), p. 245.

³NEA Research Division, "The Elementary School Principal: A Research Study" (Washington, D.C.: 1968 Yearbook, Vol. 20), p. 43.; (1958 Yearbook, Vol. 38), p. 98.

TABLE 2

TIME ALLOTMENTS FOR ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

Function	1928 %	1948 %	1958 %	1968 %
Administration	30	29	30	30
Supervision	34	39	35	30
Clerical Work	18	15	14	14
Teaching	4	2	3	4
Other Functions	14	15	18	22
Total	100	100	100	100

Adapted from NEA Research Division, "The Elementary School Principalship: A Research Study" (Washington, D.C.: 1958 Yearbook, Vol. 38), p. 98, and NEA Research Division, "The Elementary School Principalship: A Research Study" (Washington, D.C.: 1968 Yearbook, Vol. 20), p. 43.

of the mail reveal that only 13 percent was of specific and immediate use,¹ Seventy (70) percent of their incoming mail was purely informational (as opposed to requests for action),²

The five (5) executives studied by Mintzberg spent 40 percent of their time on activities devoted exclusively to transmitting information.

Studies conducted over the years in a variety of management settings have consistently revealed ten (10) common sources of management time control problems:

¹Mintzberg, "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact," pp. 6-7.

²Ibid., p. 11.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Telephone | 6. Procrastination |
| 2. Meetings | 7. Fire-fighting |
| 3. Reports | 8. Special requests from others |
| 4. Visitors | 9. Delays by others |
| 5. Delegation | 10. Reading |

The effective school executive organizes time so all the important things get done by those best suited by disposition, training, interest, and availability. Skills in delegation and time management are basis to this.¹

The review of the literature indicates that the principal is ultimately responsible for what goes on in and around the school, but this does not imply that she must personally perform all of the management and leadership activities.

Basically, research says that if the principal appears to be continuously moving from crisis to crisis something is wrong. A reassessment of the principal's role, or organizational structure, of delegating practices, and of time management practices is immediately required.

¹Hughes and Ubben, The Elementary Principal's Handbook: A Guide to Effective Action, p. 356.

CHAPTER III

IMPLEMENTATION

This study was conceptualized in November 1977 immediately after the writer became an administrator. She constantly found herself involved with planning, leading, organizing, and evaluating the total program of the school. In addition to those functions, she was also performing the following activities: (1) observing, (2) consulting, (3) diffusing (4) advising, and (5) apportioning.

Realizing how time consuming it is to perform these various tasks, the writer decided to take a serious look at the amount of time utilized each day.

Using Henry Mintzberg's article "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact"¹ as a guide, the writer categorized her activities into three roles. In this paper, she is using "roles" in relation to organized sets of behaviors identified with a position. She was concerned with activities related to her interpersonal role and its subroles of figurehead, leader, liaison; her informational role and its subroles of monitor, disseminator, spokesman; as well as, her decisional role and its subroles of entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator.

As a figurehead, the writer performed the following activities: Meetings with P.T.A. Council, approved payroll sheets, filled out principal's monthly, completed special education monthly, checked mail, attended P.E. workshop, and attended principal's meeting.

¹Mintzberg, "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact," p. 9.

As a leader, the writer conducted staff meetings, conference with Title XX Personnel, met with leadership team, met with person from psychological services.

Activities engaged in as a liaison included conference with the custodial supervisor, call to Central Office, conference with Area Resource monitor, call to payroll department concerning a staff member's check, call from Area Superintendent.

As a monitor, the writer observed classroom activities, pupils reporting to school, pupils lunch periods, fire drills as well as disaster drills.

As a disseminator the writer completed the quarterly Suspension and Expulsion report, completed a form to Family Services, composed monthly newsletter to parents, completed reports for Area Office, conferences with cafeteria manager, phone call to Reading Coordinator, conference with Resource Music Teacher.

Activities the writer engaged in as a spokesman included phone calls from parents, meeting with P.T.A. President and Parent Council, conference with instructional resource person, meeting with custodial supervisor, conference with building inspector, parental conferences.

As an entrepreneur, the writer informed parents of the school program, suggested ways for them to involve themselves with the program, sold school supplies.

Activities engaged in as a disturbance handler were conferences with pupils with behavior problems, visits from parents concerning pupil behavior, conferences with paraprofessionals.

The writer interpreted such things as approving purchase requisitions, approving free lunch cards, approving receiving reports, approving job cards as resource allocator activities.

As a negotiator, the writer made orders for additional instructional material, conference with custodial staff, met with P.T.A. Council, conversed with textbook coordinator, interviewed parent for parent aide position, conferences with teachers pertaining to agreed-upon objectives.

Each activity performed by the writer during the day was classified as to its specific role and subrole.

The writer was concerned with finding answers for the following questions:

1. How is the elementary principal's time used?
2. To what roles can these activities be related?
3. How time consuming are these activities?
4. How time consuming are these roles?
5. How can situations needing improvement be restructured?

September 1978 was set as the beginning month for collecting data.

The following were initial steps of implementation:

- Step I - Each activity performed, during a fifteen (15) minute period, of each hour, of a work day, was logged and timed. The writer chose to use the first fifteen (15) minutes of each hour. This was done daily for the months of September, October, November, and December 1978.
- Step II - Each activity categorized into the roles and subroles used by Mintzberg.
- Step III - The amount of time used to perform each role and subrole was tallied and recorded on a weekly Matrix and the same was done on a monthly Matrix. Time on both Matrixes was expressed in terms of minutes.
- Step IV - A table was constructed to denote what percentage of time was spent on performing these roles and subroles.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

The primary purpose of this chapter is the presentation and interpretation of data collected for this project.

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to take a look at the amount of time an elementary school principal spends on the vast number of activities performed by her.

Table 3 conveys that there was a fluctuation in time spent performing various roles, during each month of the research. Figure 2 shows a relationship of these various roles.

During the month of September, 403 minutes (21 percent) were given over to interpersonal affairs, while informational matters took 1,231 minutes (64 percent) and decisional responsibilities 316 minutes (15 percent).

Clearly the writer spent the largest percent of her time executing the informational role.

October shows that interpersonal affairs required 821 minutes (37 percent), while informational matters took 1,038 minutes (48 percent), and decisional responsibilities 261 (13 percent). Here again most time was utilized performing the informational role.

November found the researcher using 1,567 minutes (76 percent) performing interpersonal affairs, 360 minutes (17 percent) on informational matters and 133 minutes (6 percent) for decisional responsibilities. Emphasis this month shifted to the interpersonal role.

TABLE 3
MONTHLY TIME MATRIX *

*Time expressed in minutes.

Months	INTERPERSONAL ROLES			INFORMATIONAL ROLES			DECISIONAL ROLES			
	Leader	Liaison	Figurehead	Monitor	Disseminator	Spokesman	Allocator	Disturbance Handler	Entrepreneur	Negoti- ator
Sept.	122	51	230	425	674	132	135	99	34	48
Total	403—6 hrs. 43 minutes			1231—20 hrs. 31 minutes			316—5 hrs. 16 minutes			
Oct.	117	50	654	412	558	68	59	161	0	41
Total	821—13 hrs. 41 minutes			1038—17 hrs. 13 minutes			261—5 hrs. 29 minutes			
Nov.	136	23	1408	42	303	15	80	34	3	16
Total	1567—26 hrs. 7 minutes			360—6 hrs.			133—2 hrs. 13 minutes			
Dec.	119	30	469	241	238	23	30	74	37	116
Total	618—10 hrs. 18 minutes			502—8 hrs. 22 minutes			257—4 hrs. 17 minutes			
Sub Total	494	154	2761	1120	1773	238	304	368	74	221
%	14	5	81	35	57	8	31	38	8	23
Grand Total	3409 →			3131 →			967 →			
%	←46→			←41→			←13→			

For December 618 minutes (47 percent) were given over to Interpersonal affairs, while Informational matters took 502 minutes (25 percent) and Decisional responsibilities only 257 minutes (18 percent).

Analysis of Table 4 shows the writer giving a great percent of her time to specific subroles. Figures 3, 4, and 5 show relationships of various subroles. During September, the following was noted: Disseminating took 674 minutes (35 percent); Monitoring, 425 minutes (22 percent); Figurehead duties required 230 minutes (12 percent).

October shows a shift in subrole emphasis. Figurehead activities involved 654 minutes (31 percent); disseminator, 558 minutes (26 percent); monitoring 412 minutes (19 percent).

November saw the writer devoting 1408 minutes (68 percent) to figurehead activities; 303 minutes (15 percent) as a disseminator; and 136 minutes (7 percent) as a leader.

For December 469 minutes (35 percent) were given over to figurehead activities, while leadership activities took 119 minutes (10 percent), and monitoring only 241 minutes (17 percent).

The writer has dealt only with the three subroles that involved most of her time from September to December. Specific activities in each subrole that contributed to time consumption will be discussed next.

Table 5 reveals the following data as gathered from this writer's research.

Disseminating was the most time-consuming subrole performed by the writer, during the month of September. The researcher found herself constantly dispensing information. Some factors which contributed to this were as follows: An abundance of material from central and area offices

TABLE 4

PERCENT OF TIME USED TO PERFORM SUBROLES

Subroles	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Mins.	Mins.	Mins.	Mins.	%	%	%	%
Interpersonal								
Leader	122	117	136	119	6	6	7	10
Liaison	51	50	23	30	3	2	1	2
Figurehead	230	654	1408	469	12	31	68	35
Total	403	821	1567	618	21	39	76	47
Informational								
Monitor	425	412	42	241	22	19	2	17
Disseminator	674	558	303	238	35	26	14	17
Spokesman	132	68	15	23	7	3	1	1
Total	1231	1038	360	502	64	48	17	35
Decisional								
Allocator	135	59	80	30	7	3	04	2
Disturbance Handler	99	161	34	74	5	8	02	5
Entrepreneur	34	0	3	37	1	0	0	2
Negotiator	48	41	16	116	2	2	1	9
Total	316	261	133	257	15	13	7	18
Grand Total	1950	2120	2060	1387	100	100	100	100

RELATIONSHIPS OF THE VARIOUS ROLES

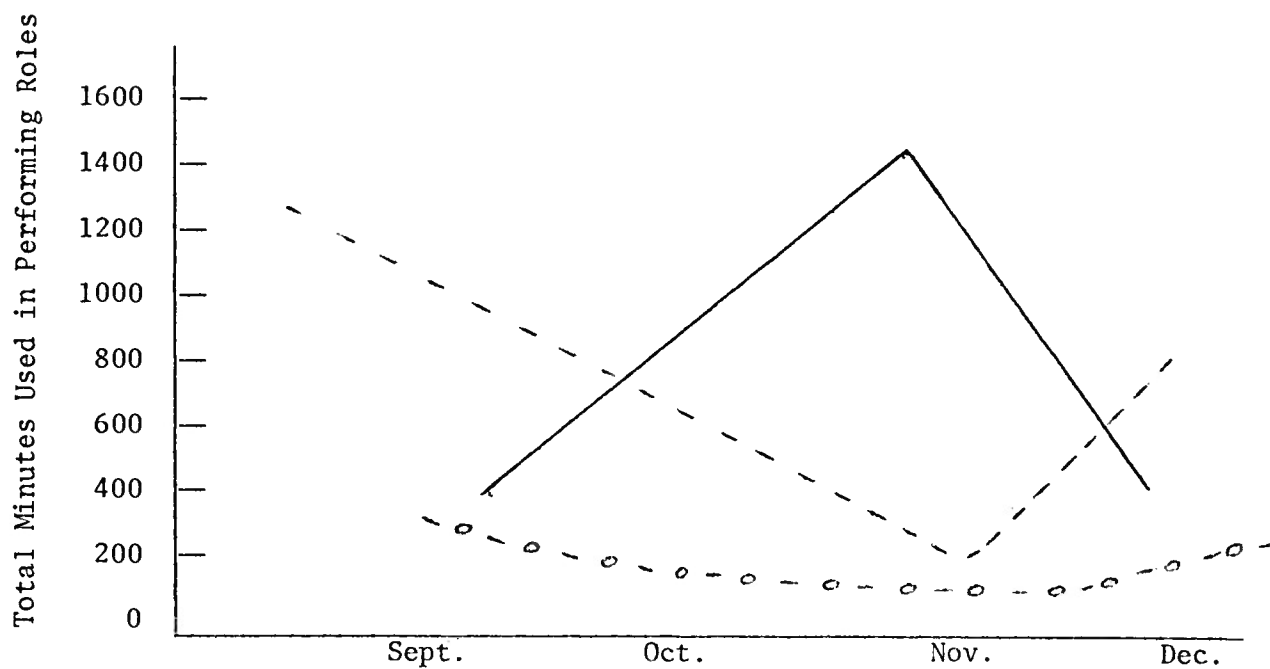


Figure 2

Legend:

Interpersonal —————

Informational - - - - -

Decisional -o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

RELATIONSHIPS OF VARIOUS SUBROLES

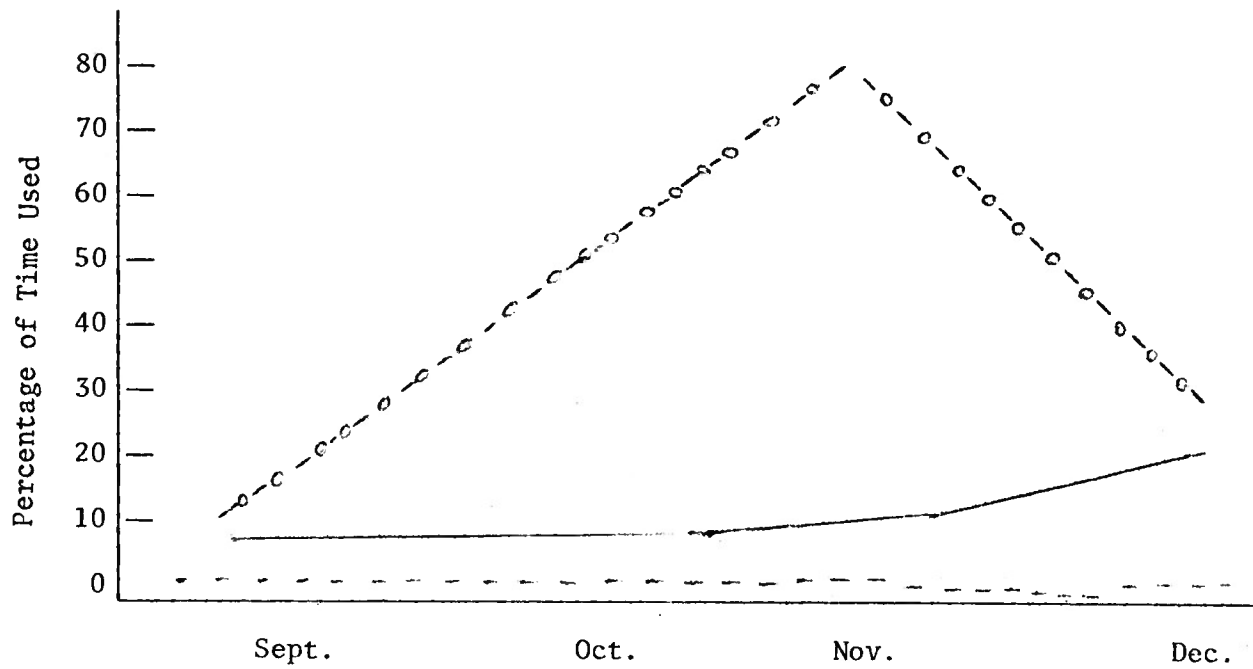


Figure 3

Legend:

Monitor —————

Disseminator - - - - -

Spokesman -o-o-o-o-o-o-

RELATIONSHIPS OF VARIOUS SUBROLES

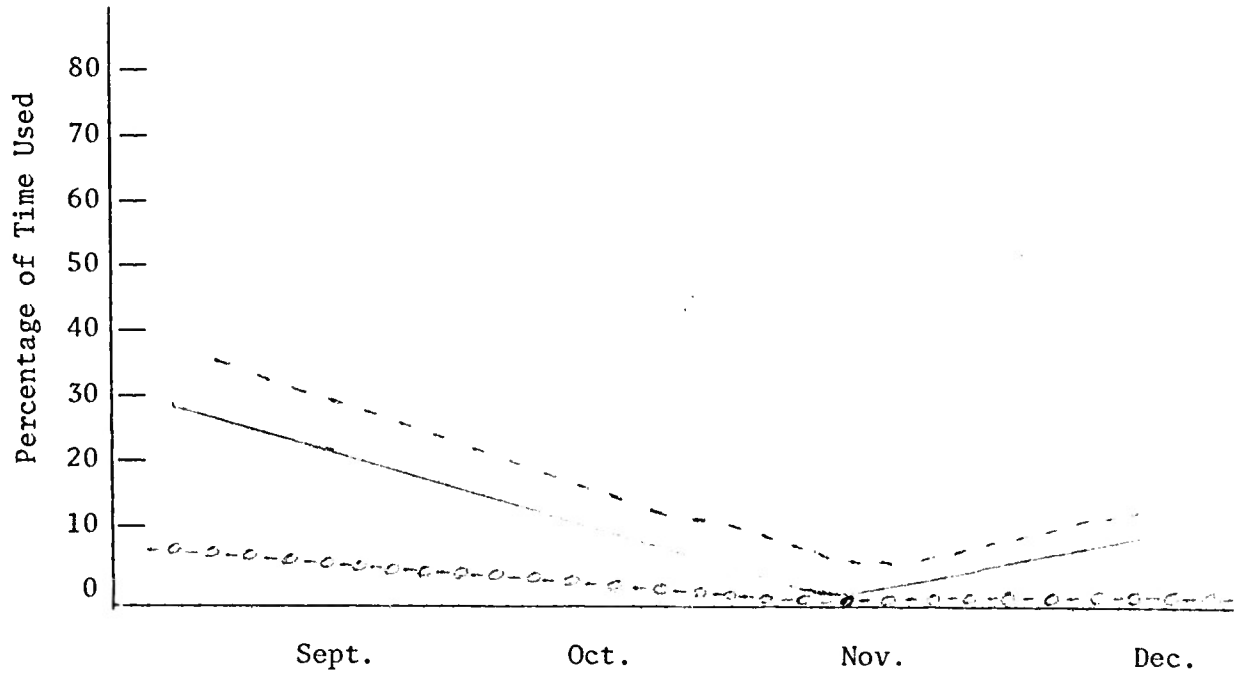


Figure 4

Legend:

Monitor —————

Disseminator - - - - -

Spokesman -o-o-o-o-o-o-

RELATIONSHIPS OF VARIOUS SUBROLES

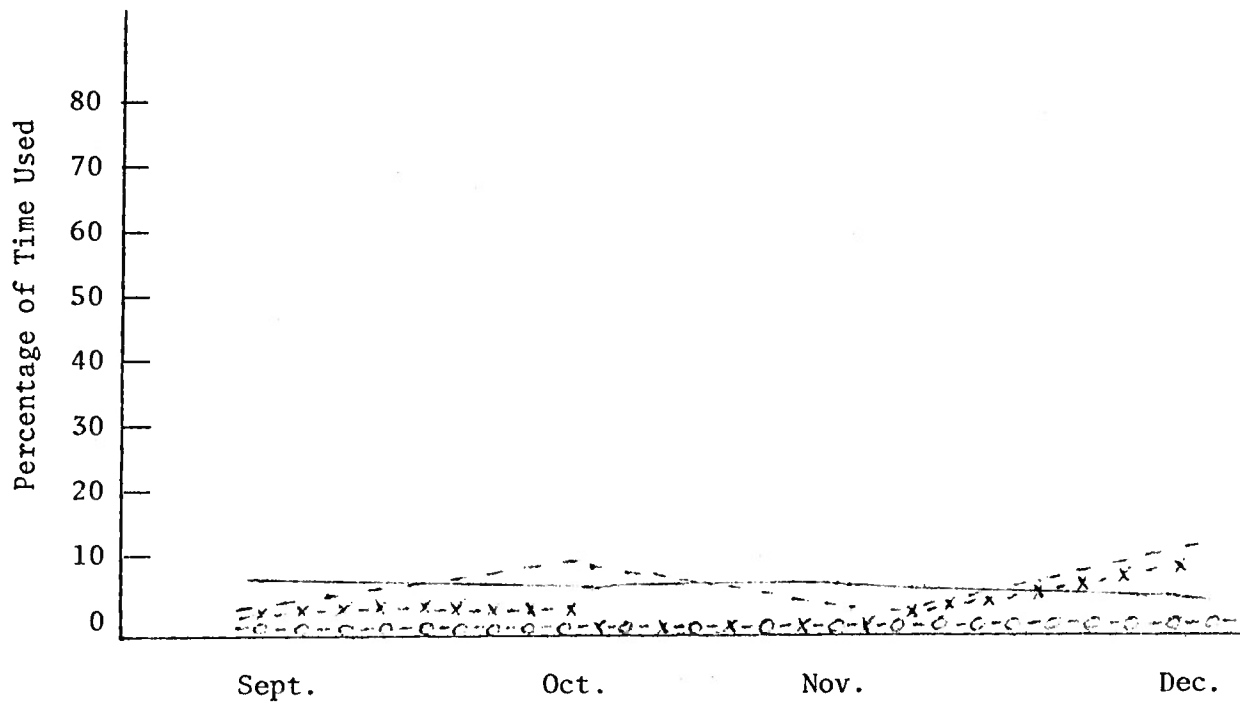


Figure 5

Legend:

Allocator —————

Disturbance Handler - - - - -

Entrepreneur -o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Negotiator -x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-

had to be shared with staff, conferences with various resource personnel discussing information to be shared with staff.

The middle of September saw the greatest time increase in this area. The writer feels that this drastic increase was due to the numerous requests made of principals at the beginning of the school year. It is at this time that administrators are required to: approve payroll sheets, free lunch applications, purchase requisition forms, receiving reports, and food service order forms. It was also during this time that the researcher attended many principal meetings.

Duties requiring dissemination began tapering off in October and by November had drastically decreased from what they were the previous two months. Here again the writer feels that restructuring contributed to this. Information was being given to key people to disseminate. The writer was beginning to delegate more and more responsibility to reliable people. Certain staff members were given reports, forms, and questionnaires to complete, after which the writer would review and affix a signature, if necessary. The secretary had begun to mimeograph and thermofax materials. More material was being disseminated in memo form.

The next largest portion of the writer's time involved activities directly related to the figurehead subrole. The writer feels that this was due to the following reasons: her attendance at principal meetings, her approval of payroll sheets, free lunch applications, purchase requisition forms, receiving reports, and food service order forms.

Additional activities such as her attendance at workshops, completing monthly reports, and attending luncheons, continued to demand a great deal of time, thereby increasing the amount of time required for the figurehead subrole.

TABLE 5
WEEKLY TIME MATRIX

Weeks	INTERPERSONAL ROLES			INFORMATIONAL ROLES			DECISIONAL ROLES			
	Leader	Liaison	Figurehead	Monitor	Disseminator	Spokesman	Allocator	Disturbance Handler	Entrepreneur	Negoti- ator
Sept.										
1st	5	-	25	135	63	66	36	8	15	16
2nd	57	36	126	103	112	36	30	47	7	15
3rd	45	-	21	121	285	-	30	20	12	-
4th	15	15	58	66	214	30	39	24	-	17
Total	122	51	230	425	674	132	135	99	34	48
Oct.										
1st	21	-	95	108	208	17	24	15	-	-
2nd	45	20	190	65	85	15	5	30	-	10
3rd	25	22	220	60	87	3	12	35	-	16
4th	26	8	149	179	178	33	18	81	-	15
Total	117	50	654	412	558	68	59	161	-	41
Nov.										
1st	-	12	128	15	50	-	9	15	-	-
2nd	45	4	372	27	98	3	15	9	-	-
3rd	28	2	446	-	38	6	10	2	3	1
4th	63	5	462	-	117	6	46	8	-	15
Total	136	25	1408	42	303	15	80	34	3	16
Dec.										
1st	84	9	195	74	114	23	16	37	22	66
2nd	17	6	211	72	104	-	12	30	-	30
3rd	18	15	63	95	20	-	2	7	15	20
4th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	119	30	469	241	238	23	30	74	37	116

By November the writer had more than doubled her time performing activities related to this subrole. It was during this time that the following activities required her attention: school inventory, teacher evaluation, state standards report, PTA Council meeting, exceptional children report, Title XX Compliance Report, and mail.

By December the writer began to see a decrease in activities in this area. There are probably several reasons for this, namely, school was closed the last week for the holidays, workshops and inventories had been completed, and delegated responsibilities to the secretary and staff members were being implemented.

Monitoring was the third largest time consumer. At the beginning of the school year, it was very necessary for the writer to observe lunchroom procedures, pupil behavior, classroom organization and management, as well as methods of instruction. This was the most crucial time for getting the school year off to a good start.

Additional activities, in this area, such as conferences with parents, teachers, and students, as well as fire and disaster drills, were performed.

The subrole of disturbance handler required most of the writer's time during the second month of school. This could easily have been the result of new pupils reporting to school for the first time. As can be expected, such changes can cause adjustment problems for some pupils.

Some time was spent on subroles as a negotiator, entrepreneur, liaison, allocator, and spokesman. All of these required only a small amount of the researcher's time. The writer found it necessary to negotiate for the following reasons: with environmental services to get heat for the building, to get additional instructional materials, and conference with the custodian and his supervisor.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

Summary

Principals frequently complain about the enormous amount of time spent on responsibilities not related to supervising the instructional program and activities that are not geared toward the improvement of professional growth.

The writer's purpose for making this study was to present a self-analysis of various activities performed by her. After reading "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact" by Henry Mintzberg, the writer decided to use the format he used as a guide for her study.

In order to do this, she maintained a daily time log. The first fifteen (15) minutes out of each working hour were used to record activities as they occurred. The activities were divided into three roles and ten subroles namely:

Interpersonal role -- figurehead, liaison, leader subroles

Informational role -- monitor, disseminator, spokesman subroles

Decisional role -- entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator subroles

Time spent on performing each role and subrole was expressed in minutes on weekly as well as monthly time matrixes. Such records gave the writer some idea as to the amount of time required to perform various activities related to the roles and subroles. The writer also recorded in percentages the amount of time spent on activities, roles, and subroles.

A task priority sheet was also made use of by the writer. Each task to be done was listed and prioritized for the specific day it was to have been done. This assisted her in setting goals and establishing priorities supporting these goals. The writer felt a need to list certain tasks daily and made sure that those tasks assigned top priority were taken care of in that order.

A summarization of activities, roles, and subroles performed during this project provided data for possible restructuring.

Findings

The following provides insight into the real use of this principal's time from September to December:

1. During September 21 percent of her time was devoted to the Interpersonal role. Sixty-four (64) percent of the time was devoted to the Informational role. Fifteen (15) percent of the time was used performing the Decisional role.
2. During October the Interpersonal role required 39 percent of her time. The Informational role consumed 48 percent of the time. The Decisional role required 13 percent.
3. By November the writer was devoting 76 percent of her time performing the Interpersonal role. Seventeen (17) percent of the time was spent on the Informational role. The Decisional role required 6 percent of the writer's time.
4. During December 47 percent of the writer's time was given over to the Interpersonal role. Thirty-five (35) percent was given to the Informational role and 18 percent was given to the Decisional role.
5. Disseminating was the most time consuming subrole performed by the writer during September. This subrole consumed 35 percent of her time.
6. October, November, and December found the writer's time being consumed by the figurehead role. The percent of time was 31, 68, and 35 respectively.
7. The entrepreneur subrole is the only subrole for which no activities were performed by the writer during the month of October.

8. A small percent of the writer's time was also spent on activities in the subrole areas of liaison and allocator.
9. Monitoring was the third largest time consuming subrole.
10. The subrole of disturbance handler required the largest amount of the writer's time during October.
11. The least amount of the writer's time was spent on the spokesman subrole.

Conclusions

By virtue of the fact that this writer was designated to be in charge of a school, she was expected to exemplify a certain amount of formal authority which led to various interpersonal relations. Having gained status, the writer had access to a wealth of information, from which she could make certain decisions.

Mintzberg states that a manager's job operates under myths that do not bear up under careful scrutiny of the facts. The writer concludes the same about her job. One such folklore is that managers are reflective systematic planners. As a matter of fact, studies show that managers are stern hard workers involved with a variety of activities that have no cohesion. Action activities and not reflective activities are what managers are oriented to.

The writer, too, was involved in a variety of activities characterized by brevity that consumed too much of her time. The work pace was unrelenting. Such behavior is the result of how one must respond to the pressures of her job.

Another folklore is that effective managers have no regular duties to perform. In fact, managerial work involves performing a number of duties on a regular basis.

The writer concludes that there are specific duties that a principal performs on regular basis. There are certain mandatory activities such

as reports, forms, etcetera, required of the writer each month. Many of these activities are redundant and seem unnecessary.

The writer further concludes that the majority of her time was spent on activities that involved verbal communication, due to the fact that she had to make use of the telephone, as well as take part in numerous conferences.

Because of the vast amount of information that had to be shared with the staff, the writer concluded that dissemination was one of her most time-consuming subroles. This accounted for the large percent of time consumed by the Informational role.

The writer also concludes that the amount of time required to handle disturbances decreased, as the adjustment period for the beginning of the school year stabilized.

The writer further concludes that having to attend meetings and workshops attributed to the large percent of time used performing the figure-head subrole.

Since monitoring ranked third in time consumed, it is concluded that less time is being devoted to activities directly related to supervising the instructional phase of the program.

The writer concludes further that she must delegate more responsibilities, as well as use the assistance of others in disseminating materials, in order to minimize time devoted to these activities.

Because of the varied and numerous activities the writer was involved in from day to day, the writer feels that there would not have been any change in the results had the time been recorded at a different 15 minute period of each working hours.

Implications

Even though the principal's job includes various roles, it is essential that she not become engrossed in activities that deter her from the main thrust of her role.

Principals must learn how to control the administrative day so as to spend time on those tasks that are high priority. They must first decide how time should be spent by taking stock of actual time allocation and finally organize time to place maximum effort on high priority tasks and provide an administrative structure that delegates other tasks.

The following is now in evidence after having done this study:

1. The secretary is held accountable for screening phone calls, mail, and scheduling conferences.
2. The secretary must keep a log of all materials ordered, date received, date issued, and record fund from which purchase was made.
3. The Leadership Team Chairman is in charge of Educational Curriculum Development meetings. She along with representatives from each grade level comprise this group which coordinates the instructional phase of the school program.
4. The Title I teacher serves as the liaison person for the school and Title I. She also has the responsibility of test contact teacher.
5. Parent-worker has the responsibility of keeping in contact with parents so that the line of communication between school and home remains open. She makes phone calls and visits whenever the need arises.
6. An administrative assistant has been designated to be the person in charge whenever the principal is off campus.
7. Teachers are held accountable for solving minor discipline problems. Only those that are of a more serious nature are referred to the principal.
8. Repairs or equipment that would require custodial staff is requested in writing from the secretary.
9. Monthly reports requiring the signature of the principal are required in the office at least a day before they are

due to be mailed. This also applies to purchase requisitions and grocery orders.

10. Persons designated as chairman of charitable organizations receive and distribute all information pertaining to said organization.

Recommendations

The writer makes the following recommendations:

1. Some means of orientation be afforded principals in the area of "time management". This could be done at the graduate level or as a part of the staff development program implemented by the board.
2. It is further recommended that other principals make similar studies. Just as this writer was not cognizant of how she specifically used her time, there are others also unaware of how this precious commodity is utilized.
3. Those agencies that schedule workshops and meetings outside of the immediate environment should weigh the amount of time involved in attending as opposed to what's gained by the principal in participating.

Reflections

This position carries with it many restraints. One must learn to cope with them. It is humanly impossible to survive without the assistance of many other people. At the beginning, I was trying to do many things that are now the responsibility of others. I had to recognize the fact that delegating responsibilities was not a sign of inefficiency. I also discovered that those persons designated to take on more responsibilities had more interest and concern for what they were assigned. They felt as if they belonged, as well as needed.

As activities were shared more, I found time to complete many tasks that had previously been left undone.

In no way am I saying that my study has been a cure-all. I am merely saying that it has taught me how to conserve and use wisely the time I have.

The time log and prioritized list of activities are very helpful to me. I now realize that I can only do so much within a given span of time. I am also aware that some things are more important than others. As a result of using these instruments, I more or less take charge of what it is that I must do, rather than let the activities take charge of me.

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A
DAILY ACTIVITY LOG

Day	Date	Time of Performance	Activity	Time Spent on Activity	Role	Comments

APPENDIX B

WEEKLY/MONTHLY TIME TALLY SHEET

Activity	Total Time Spent on Activity	Role	Subrole	Total Time Spent on Role	Total Time Spent on Subrole	Comments

APPENDIX C

MONTHLY SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES ROLES AND SUBROLES

Month	Activity	Role-Subrole	Month	Activity	Role-Subrole

APPENDIX D
TASK PRIORITY SHEET

Task to be Done	Priority	Task to be Done Today

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